

# Nursing: Malaysian Style

by Lyn Karstadt

At the end of July it was my great pleasure to come out to Malaysia to attend and present at the second BIMP (Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and Philippines) conference which was hosted by the Sabah Nurses Association in Kota Kinabalu. This was a wonderful opportunity to catch up with old friends and colleagues and to network to share ideas and challenges with other nurses from all over the world. The conference was a great success and in addition to inspirational papers and a good social diet the **Malaysian Journal of Nursing** was introduced to those present.

Delegates inspected this first issue and showed great enthusiasm at the prospect of their very own professional periodical from which they expected articles and comment pieces that would guide contemporary nursing care here in Malaysia. Some talked of submitting articles whilst others were eager to use this journal as a resource to guide their own practice. For my part I tried hard to find a partner to work with me on this column. Many seemed enthusiastic and promised to be in touch, and no doubt as the issues roll out and their enthusiasm continues to grow, some will take that step and be in touch to help me to give this piece that special Malaysian flavour that will inevitably, over time, make it special.

The conference was concerned with "the sharing of best practice through global partnerships" and therefore networking between home and overseas delegates was particularly pertinent. Papers presented and conversations over meals and late into the evening confirmed, for the most part, that the challenges faced by nurses and nurse educators are similar the world over as presenters explored topics such as teamwork, multi-professional working and child abuse. Many of the presentations were research based, with excited

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academics and practitioners keen to influence the practice of colleagues and generate informed discussion. I presented my own research and was delighted that others were eager to discuss and debate the model that I had offered moving my musings from a UK specific to a more global context.

The quality of discussion was testimony to the emerging professionalism of nurses in Southeast Asia. Nursing in Malaysia continues to strive to become more professional and there is clear

evidence that much has already been achieved. The number of nurses undertaking top-up degrees continues to grow and I like may other academics from places like the United Kingdom and Australia, feel privileged to be a part of this venture. At the moment many top-up degrees are being offered in collaboration with overseas universities, but this is merely a capacity building exercise enabling enough Malaysian nurses to be prepared to step forward as the nursing academics of tomorrow. Similarly for the first few issues of this, your journal, there are several contributions from overseas. However, as time passes I am confident that the majority of contributors will be Malaysians

offering their comments and expertise to the rest of the world.

Graduate education is now being enjoyed by many nurses here in Malaysia and those undertaking such programmes clearly exhibit graduate skills. Nursing is a problem solving activity, and nurses with graduate skills explicitly base the care they deliver on credible evidence. It is in this context that the profession continues to move forward.

Malaysian nurses are, however, well regarded all over the world for their caring skills and empathetic

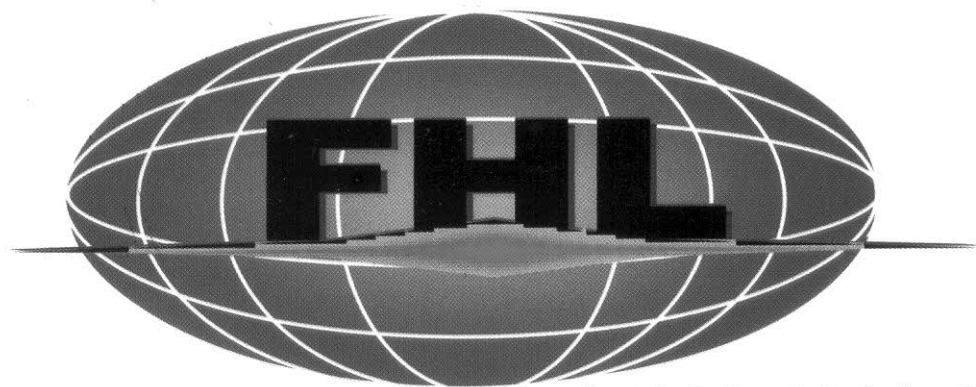
attitudes, and it is important that these are retained alongside a more scientific research orientated approach. I look forward to articles that combine the art of nursing with clear underpinning evidence. Nursing in Malaysia is very special, and whilst I understand why, as a group, nurses are striving to be more professional and emulate the autonomous practices seen in places like the United Kingdom, America and Australia, I would urge you to ensure that you never lose those aspects of your professional practice that make Malaysian

nursing and Malaysian nurses so exceptional.

So, yet again, I throw down the gauntlet. If you are a Malaysian nurse with an interest in nurse education, help me to contribute to the "Education Matters" column with a clear Malaysian flavour. Although the challenges that we face are, for the most part, the same the world over, this is your journal so let us ensure that the challenges are presented from your perspective. Let us together present nurse education to the world Malaysian style!! ■

#### About the Author:

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